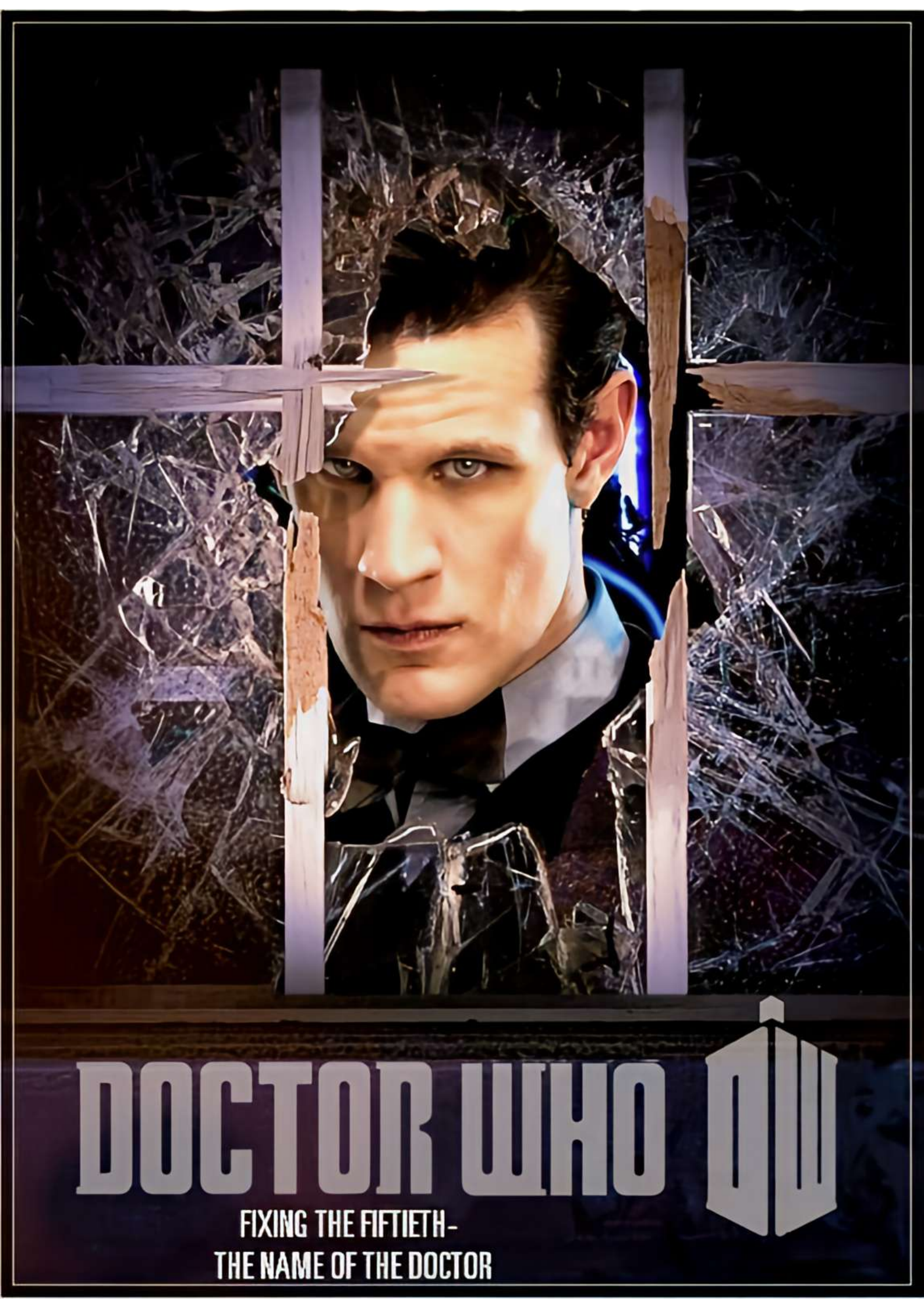
DOCTOR WHO
FIXING THE FIFTIETH-
THE NAME OF THE DOCTOR

FIXING THE FIFTIETH:

"THE NAME OF THE DOCTOR"

BASED ON TELEPLAYS AND TRANSCRIPTS

BY STEVEN MOFFAT & JPGR

ADAPTED BY ZARIUS

CHAPTER ONE

LONDON

1893

Stationed at their parlour house, Madame Vastra sat at a multi-sided table as her partner Jenny Flint lit a candle positioned at the centre.

Jenny sat beside Vastra as she blew out the taper with the gentlest of breaths from her lips.

Vastra placed her hand in Jennys' and gave her a reassuring smile.

"Sleep well, my love" she wished.

"You too" Jenny responded in kind.

As they drifted off, neither of them could detect a ghostly whispering coming from a figure staring in from the opposite end of a window. It was clad in a black coat with features made of Paley white cloth.

Vastra and Jenny awoke to find themselves in the same general setting, but things were a bit more off in regards to focus. The walls now moved in a pattern, a cross between a lava lamp and a kaleidoscope.

"Oh, I like the new desktop" an impressed Jenny remarked as she observed her surroundings.

“I was getting a little bored of the Taj Mahal” Vastra admitted as a tea tray appeared on the table, she helped herself to some of the inviting brown liquid as she poured it from a teapot.

“The tea should be superb; it's drawn from one of my favourite memories”

There was a loud thud. Vastra, unphased, continued to pour her tea.

“Strax, good of you to join us” she said, as the third member of the Paternoster trinity joined his compatriots.

Once a lowly nurse, serving in the Sontaran battle republic, Strax had found a new home and purpose fighting injustices alongside Vastra and Jenny.

“This had better be important!” Strax responded, “Before I read your invitation, I was in the middle of destroying some very pleasant primitives”

“You got in another bar fight. It’s your regular time of the week” Jenny commented, sighing deeply with disappointment in Strax’s persistent desires for conquest, built and bred into his race’s very DNA.

“I apologise for the interruption, but there is urgent news concerning the Doctor” Vastra explained.

“Who else is coming?” Strax asked.

“The women of course” Vastra replied.

LONDON

2013

In the kitchen of the Maitland family home, Clara Oswald opened a cabinet and took out a bag of flour, she turned to put it on a counter as she held a mixing bowl in her other hand.

Angie and Artie, the children she supervised, were seated at the table, toiling away at their homework.

“Oh, no. You're going to try and make a soufflé again, aren't you?” Angie replied.

“My mum's soufflé, yeah. This time I'll get it right. This time I will be Soufflé Girl!” Clara proclaimed.

“How can it be your Mum's soufflé, if you're making it?”Artie asked.

“Because, Artie, like my mum always said - the soufflé isn't the soufflé, the soufflé is the recipe” Clara revealed.

Angie wasn’t that impressed.

“Was your mum deep on puddings?”

“She was a *great* woman, I’ll have no ill spoken of her while I’m in this house” said Clara defensively.

Clara then noticed a letter addressed to her stacked on top of all the other mail that had been forwarded to the Maitland's.

"Angie, What's this?"

"Oh, it arrived today - for you"

Clara turned the envelope over to find that it was sealed with wax, with a note on the back reading '*open when alone*'

Clara walked around the room as she read the letter.

"My dearest Clara... The Doctor entrusted me with your contact details, in the event of an emergency, and I fear one has now arisen. Assuming this letter will have reached you, as planned, on April 10th 2013, please find and light the enclosed candle"

Clara reached into the envelope and found there was indeed a small candle included.

"It will release a soporific which will induce a trance state, enabling direct communication across the years"

An alarmed Clara dropped the candle and pressed on with reading, uncertain if she wanted to finish.

“However, as I realise you have no reason to trust this letter, I have taken the liberty of embedding the same soporific into the fabric of the paper you are now holding. Speak soon!"

Clara swiftly fainted and passed into unconscious.

When she awoke, she found herself seated on a classy Edwardian chair.

Vastra handed Jenny a cup of tea.

“So glad you could make it” she said.

“Where am I?” Clara inquired, sipping from the tea.

“Exactly where you were - but sleeping” Jenny explained.

“Time travel has always been possible in dreams. We are awaiting only one more participant” Vastra revealed as she took another sip.

“Oh, no - not the one with the gigantic head?” Strax remarked.

A despairing Jenny was quick to correct him.

“It's hair, Strax”

In a puff of smoke, like something out of a magic act, Professor River Song appeared seated in another of the chairs.

“Madame Vastra!” River spoke in recognition of the evening’s host.

“Professor Song! Help yourself to some tea” Vastra offered.

“Why thank you” River said, holding up a flute of champagne.

“How did you do that?” Jenny asked, confused.

“Disgracefully” River mischievously teased as she sipped the champagne. She took a gander at Clara and inspected her.

“Ah. Perhaps you two haven't met. This is the Doctor's companion”

Clara and River gave Vastra deathly glares.

“That is, his current…travelling… assistant” Vastra spoke, correcting herself, as if she had deeply offended one of the two but couldn’t really tell which.

Strax observed Vastra’s embarrassing gaff and how it was affecting her body language.

“Have you gone a darker green?” he asked.

“Clara Oswald, that’s her full name” Vastra revealed, pressing on.

“Professor River Song. The Doctor might have mentioned me” River spoke.

“Oh, yeah, of course he has. Professor Song. Sorry, it's just I never realized you were a woman” Clara replied.

River’s face barely changed imperceptibly. She was hurt and surprised that the Doctor hadn’t mentioned her more than in passing.

Vastra insisted they get on with the business at hand. Jenny believed this was indeed for the best, fearing they would soon otherwise be distracted by the grip of raised emotional tension.

Vastra touched the air above the centre of the table; a projection appeared above them, the interior of a prison cell in the dead of night.

A man Vastra had visited earlier quite troubled, sat on the end of his bunk bed, rocking back and forth.

“Clarence DeMarco. Murderer, under sentence of death. He offered us *this* in exchange for his life”

Vastra waved her hand through the projection and it changed to present a series of equations and charts.

They were to River, unmistakably, space time coordinates.

Inside of the house, an exterior door opened the key still in the lock, a foolish error on Jenny Flint’s part when making preparations for the evening.

“These coordinates, Mr DeMarco claims, will lead to the location of the Doctor's greatest secret” Vastra revealed.

“Which is?” Clara asked.

“We don't know. It's a secret!” Jenny answered.

A most flustered Vastra felt contempt for Clara’s answer. Like many of his more recent companions, Clara was another who felt owed more than she had earned in the Doctor’s company.

“The Doctor does not discuss his secrets with anyone, my dear. If you're still entertaining the idea that you are an exception to this rule, ask yourself one question. What is his name?”

More ghostly whispering could be heard, much like before, only it was much closer, and much *louder*.

For the visitors from outside had now broken *in*.

A haunting figure breezed past an unconscious Jenny.

Within the dream parlour, Jenny placed a hand up to her cheek, puzzled; she turned her head as if expecting to see something.

“Well, I know it. His name” River revealed.

“What, you know his name? He told you?” Clara asked.

“I *made* him” River answered.

Clara pressed ahead and asked her how, when, where, and why.

“It took a while” River said, and went no further than that.

“So you're a... friend of his, then?” Clara asked.

“A little more than a friend - a long time ago”

Now Vastra was becoming inquisitive.

“He's still never contacted you?”

“He doesn't like endings” River admitted.

A figure bent over and whispered over Jenny as she slumbered, bringing a chill into the parlour.

River began her own line of questioning.

“So what else did this DeMarco tell you? He didn't buy his life with some co-ordinates - how did he prove their value?”

“One word and one word only” Vastra revealed.

“What word?” River asked.

“One I'd heard in connection with the Doctor before. Trenzalore”

River asked another question.

“*How* exactly did he describe what he was giving you?”

Vastra changed the projection to highlight DeMarco once more, everyone observed him carefully.

'The Doctor has a secret, you know. He has one he will take to the grave. And it is *discovered*”'

The utterance of these words spurred River into defensive action; she insisted that Vastra had misunderstood.

Jenny, in the meantime, had become all too aware of her earlier mistake with the lock, had figured out the cause of the chill in the room, and what it meant for her.

She had damned them. She had damned them *all*.

“Ma'am, I'm sorry - I just realised, I forgot to lock the doors” Jenny confessed, apologetically, and far too late.

“It doesn't matter Jenny”

“No, ma'am, please. I should've locked up before we went into the trance” Jenny said, persisting with her apology, trying to bring attention to her folly before it claimed her lover and the Doctor’s friends.

Vastra turned back to Jenny, sensing the almost paralysing terror in her voice.

“Someone's broken in. Someone's *with* us - I can hear them” Jenny uttered, now visibly trembling.

A pale white face leaned in towards Jenny’s true body, its mouth opened wide, showing sharpened pointed teeth.

“Jenny, are you all right?” Vastra asked, growing more concerned.

A tear fell from Jenny’s eye.

*“*Sorry, ma'am, so sorry, so sorry, so sorry... I think I've been murdered”

Back in the real world, Jenny lay on the floor in a heap, three figures stood over her.

Within the dream parlour, Jenny began to fade.

“Jenny!” Vastra screamed, reaching out to her as she became little more than a wisp of charred smoke.

River stood up, and sprang into action.

“You're under attack. You must wake up now, just wake up”

River darted over to a panicking Vastra, and gave her a harsh and violent slap.

“DO IT!”

Vastra awoke in the real world and quickly rose to her feet, seeing the intruders stand over Jenny.

“Who are you? What have you done to her?” Vastra cried murder at the forefront of her warrior’s mind if they dared to admit that they had a hand in bringing harm to the one woman who provided warmth to her cold Silurian heart.

The creatures turned on Vastra and *hissed*.

Back in the dream parlour, River dosed Strax with the contents of her champagne glass, determined to snap him out of his own dream state.

As Strax awoke in the tavern where he had spent the evening quarrelling, and brawling, with the local townsfolk, he sat up to find many of the same intrusive creatures surrounding him there also.

They were known in parts unspoken as the Whisper Men, and they had not yet demonstrated the fullest reach of their power.

Until *now*.

They burst into the dream parlour, and surrounded Clara and River.

Tell the Doctor

“Tell him what?” Clara asked.

The projection over the table reformed to display the features of Doctor Simeon, the first host to the cosmic chaos bringer known to the Doctor of old, summoner of the Snowmen, and master of the Yeti.

This was the Great Intelligence.

His friends are lost for evermore. Unless he goes to Trenzalore

CHAPTER TWO

LONDON

2013

Clara was soon thrown from the dream parlour and back into the waking world, safe again in the Maitland residence.

Clara picked herself up off the floor and traced the Doctor's calls to its source.

"Am I getting warm? Angie? Artie? Am I getting warm?!" he said, sticking his hand in front of him.

Clara found that he was blindfolded. He had been playing a game of hide and seek with the children.

"Am I getting warm? Look, I'm pretty sure you have to tell me if I'm getting warm. I'm-I'm-I'm pretty sure that's in the rules"

Clara came down the stairs, approaching him.

"Doctor?"

“Ha, Clara! How are you, don't worry. Everything's under control. Mr Maitland went next door, so I said I'd look after the kids. They wanted to go to the cinema, but I said no, I said no - not until you wake up, I was very firm”

Clara sussed out Artie and Angie’s plans.

“Blind Man’s Bluff was their suggestion wasn’t it?” she said.

“Yes, correct, now where are they?” the Doctor asked.

Clara stepped off of the last step and removed the Doctor’s blindfold.

“At the cinema”

The Doctor processed the information and responded with a most apt description of the two manipulate little terrors.

“The little…*Daleks*!”

The Doctor looked at Clara; she looked like she had seen the front and back of hell itself.

“What's wrong?”

Clara tenderly poured tea into two cups at the kitchen table.

“So who was she?” Clara asked, “The lady was the funny name and the space hair”

She looked over at The Doctor as he sat in the parlour, looking knocked for six, or in this case, eleven.

“An old… *friend*”

“What like an ex?” Clara asked.

The Doctor wouldn’t verify this, focusing instead on what she had asked Vastra for those ‘exact words’ from DeMarco.

Clara walked into the parlour with the tea, giving The Doctor the information he desired.

"The Doctor has a secret he will take to the grave. It is discovered."

Clara came to stand in front of The Doctor and saw naked sadness in his eyes; he was on the verge of an emotional breakdown.

“Doctor?”

“Sorry” The Doctor said, his composure deteriorating rapidly.

“And it was Trenzalore they said? It was definitively Trenzalore?” he continued, hoping that she had been simply mistaken.

“Yeah” Clara replied, part of her regretting the honesty if it could spare her friend pain.

The Doctor placed his hands over his eyes and let out a mournful, raw sigh of despair.

“Oh dear…sorry” he said, sniffing.

He got up and left the house, Clara hurried after him.

Inside of the TARDIS, The Doctor sat down on one of his storage containers underneath the console, Clara slowly walked down the steps, her arms folded.

“Well?”

“Trenzalore. I've heard the name, of course. Dorium mentioned it, a few others. Always suspected what it was, never wanted to find out myself. River would know, though –River always knew”

The Doctor beckoned Clara over to him, pulling on a cable connector as he did so.

“Right, come here, give me your hand”. The coordinates you saw will still be in your memory. I'm linking you into the TARDIS telepathic circuit, won't hurt a bit”

He jabbed the cable into her palm, Clara let out a yelp.

“Sorry, I lied, I do that” The Doctor said.

“OK. What is Trenzalore? And be straight with me, no fibbing”

“When you are a time traveller, there is one place you must never go. One place in all of space and time you must never, ever find yourself”

“Where?”

“You didn't listen, did you? You lot never do, that's the problem! "The Doctor has a secret he will take to the grave. It is discovered." He wasn't talking about my secret, no, no, no, that's not what's been found. He was talking about my...grave. Trenzalore is where I'm buried”

“How can you have a grave?” Clara asked as The Doctor strided over to the console.

“Because we all do - somewhere out there in the future, waiting for us. The trouble with time travel, you can actually end up visiting...”

“But you're not going to. You just said it's the one place you must never go” Clara reminded him.

“I have to save Vastra and Strax. Jenny too, if it's still possible. They cared for me during the dark times - never questioned me, never judged me, they were just... kind. I owe them. I have a duty. No point in telling you this is too dangerous”

“None at all. How can we save them?”

“Apparently... by breaking into my own tomb!”

The Doctor threw a lever and the TARDIS dematerialized.

While in flight, it shuddered and jerked, throwing The Doctor and Clara off balance.

Clara gripped the console tightly.

“What's that?”

“She just figured out where we're going” The Doctor explained as he tried to keep control of the TARDIS. “She's against it. I'm about to cross my own time line in the biggest way possible - the TARDIS doesn't like it”

The TARDIS hurtled away from Earth, the Doctor fought against the controls, pushing harder on them to move the craft forward.

“She's fighting it! Hang on! Hang on!”

Sparks flew all over the console as the TARDIS continued to resist the Doctor. One blast hurtled the travellers against the very rails.

They looked up to find themselves lost in a blanket of darkness; the only light coming from the console sparks.

“Now what?” Clara asked.

“She doesn't want to land. She's shut down” The Doctor answered, smacking a lever in frustration.

The Doctor walked over to the main door and opened them; staring down at the planet they were now orbiting.

“OK. So that's where I end up”

Clara came over to his side and stared down alongside him. Below them was a planet coated in ash, fire, and smoke.

A near lifeless *ruin*.

“Always thought maybe I'd retire. Take up watercolours, or bee-keeping, or something. Apparently not”

“So how do we get down there? Jump?” Clara joked.

“Don't be silly! We fall” The Doctor replied, closing the doors with a snap of his fingers.

“You gotta teach me that trick sometime” Clara replied, wondering if the TARDIS would ever trust or like her enough for that to work whenever she tried it one day.

“She’s turned off practically everything, except the anti-gravs, so guess what I’m about to turn off?” The Doctor announced, turning his sonic on the console.

Clara shrieked as the TARDIS plummeted towards the charred planet below.

Upon crash landing, the Doctor burst through the doors and looked upwards at a pane of glass that had broken off of the ship. He pressed a finger to the hole.

Oops!” he said.

The Doctor looked above and around him before steeling himself to step out fully. The graveyard was packed tight with gravestones of various sizes and shapes. Above, lightning flashes and thunder rumbled.

Clara, also braving the conditions of the planet, stepped outside, closed the TARDIS door and dashed over to him.

“You OK? Visiting your own grave - anyone would be scared”

“It's more than that. I'm a time traveller. I've probably time-travelled more than anyone else.

“Meaning?”

“Meaning… my grave is potentially the most dangerous place in the universe. Shall we?”

“Gravestones are a bit basic anyway” Clara remarked.

The Doctor and Clara observed the words marked on the graves, each a eulogy for a warrior or solider.

“It’s a battlefield. My war to end all wars” The Doctor realized.

“Why are so many of them that much bigger?” asked Clara.

“They're soldiers, the bigger the gravestone, the higher the rank” The Doctor revealed.

They looked ahead at something, awe and shock on their faces.

They turned to each other, then looked ahead again Mounted high on a hill was a giant blue phone box, a future version of the TARDIS itself.

“Well. Bright side - it's a helluva monument” Clara observed.

“It's the TARDIS” The Doctor responded.

“I can see that”

“No. When a TARDIS is dying, sometimes the dimension dams start breaking down. They used to call it a size leak, all the bigger-on-the-inside starts leaking to the outside. It grows. When I say that's the TARDIS, I don't mean it looks like the TARDIS - I mean it actually is the TARDIS. My TARDIS from the future. What else would they bury me in?”

Clara started to follow but stopped and turned at the sound of a familiar voice.

“Clara. Don't speak, don't say my name – he can't see or hear me, only you can” uttered the voice, unmistakably belonging to that of Professor River Song.

“Well, come on then” The Doctor yelled, calling to Clara.

“We're mentally linked, it's the conference call. I kept the line open” River explained.

The Doctor strided over.

“Who are you talking to? We need to get…”

He stopped and stared.

“River?” he said, as he made his way over to a stone bearing River’s name.

He ran his fingers across it.

“That can't be right. Professor Song isn’t dead” a befuddled Clara spoke.

“Oh, she's dead, I'm afraid. She's been dead for a very long time” The Doctor revealed.

“Yeah, should probably have mentioned that - never the right time” River said, taking ownership of her secrecy.

Clara could hear hushed whispers all around them and turned around.

“Doctor!”

The Doctor hurried around in front of Clara as the group of Whisper Men approached. He reached into his inner jacket pocket and whipped out the sonic to try and use on them.

Unphased, the Whisper Men continued to approach.

This man must fall as all men must the fate of all is always dust

The Doctor slapped the sonic against his hand and tried again. When it still didn’t work, he blew on it and tried a third time.

“If it's not my gravestone, then what is it?” River asked, trying to clue Clara in to something significant.

Clara, getting the gist, turned to the Doctor and asked him what the grave could really be.

The Doctor spared a glance at Clara.

“The gravestone?”

“Maybe it's a false grave!” River said, Clara repeated this verbatim to the Doctor, who agreed that it was a possibility.

“Maybe it's a secret entrance to the tomb” Clara continued, repeating lines being fed to her through River.

The Doctor tapped the sonic against his forehead.

“Yes, of course, makes sense, they’d never have buried my wife out here” The Doctor realized, and used the sonic on the gravestone.

The ground opened underneath them and they fell. The Whisper Men all converged on the hole.

The man who lies will lie no more when this man lies at Trenzalore

CHAPTER THREE

The Doctor and Clara walked through a doorway into a dark tunnel lined with intrusive roots. The Doctor found and lit a torch before removing it from the sconce.

“Where are we?” Clara asked.

“Catacombs” The Doctor answered.

“I hate catacombs” Clara replied.

As they hurried along the corridor, Clara took the opportunity to ask more about the song that had sang to her.

“So how come I met your dead wife?”

“Well, you know how it is when you lose someone close to you. I sort of made a back-up” The Doctor explained.

Clara looked over to see if River was still tracking them, she could make out her figure not far away, pulsating with radiant white light.

Clara could hear River’s voice in her head, the mental link still strong.

“I died saving him” River’s voice told her, “In return; he saved me to a database in the biggest library in the universe. Left me like a book on a shelf. Didn't even say goodbye. He doesn't like endings”

A Whisper Man walked right through the light, its hand reaching for Clara.

“Come on, run, run” The Doctor instructed hastily, grabbing Clara’s arm and pulling her along

The Intelligence looked out over the cemetery from the main entrance of the TARDIS.

“It was a minor skirmish, by the Doctor's blood-soaked standards - not exactly the Time War, but enough to finish him. In the end, it was too much for the old man”

He turned to face the others.

“Blood-soaked?” Jenny asked.

“The Doctor has been many things, but never blood-soaked” Vastra countered.

The husk of Simeon realized this was what it was like to have even the great intelligence insulted.

“Tell that to the leader of the Sycorax. Or Solomon the trader, or the Cybermen, or the Daleks. The Doctor lives his life in darker hues, day upon day, and he will have other names before the end. The Storm. The Beast. The Valeyard”

“Even if any of this were true – which I take the liberty of doubting - how did you come by this information?” Vastra asked.

“I AM information” The Intelligence proclaimed.

“Come on, quickly, we’re in” The Doctor said, as he burst through a door.

Clara followed but was swiftly grabbed by one of the Whisper Men, the Doctor reached for her hand and pulled as hard as he could.

Successfully loosening Clara from the Whisper Men’s grip, the Doctor pushed the door shut, sealing their pursuers away.

The Doctor leaned back against the door.

“Yowzah!” he yelled in triumph.

The Doctor dropped the torch and he and Clara continued their long trek through the corridors.

They came up towards some steps and climbed upwards.

“Think I remember the way!”

The Doctor turned around to help Clara along, only to find she was lagging behind.

The Doctor ran over to Clara as she staggered.

She leaned on a nearby wall for support.

“It’s OK” the Doctor reassured her, “The dimensioning forces this deep in the TARDIS, they can make you a bit giddy”

The Doctor held her against him as they powered forward.

“I know, I know” Clara uttered, before pulling away and stared at the Doctor, a powerful realization on the tip of her mind.

“How do I know? How do I know that?”

“Clara, it's OK, you're fine” The Doctor repeated with the reassurances, but Clara was fixated on working out her strange surreal sense of dejavu.

“Have we, have we done this before?” she asked.

And then, it hit. Memories of her time on a malfunctioning TARDIS, on the verge of collapse, an incident that had required a temporal, time-bending reset.

“We have! We have done this before, climbing through a wrecked TARDIS - you said things, things I'm not supposed to remember” Clara revealed.

“We can't do this now. The TARDIS is a ruin; the telepathic circuits are awakening memories you shouldn't even have”

One by one, the forgotten memories came flooding back, confessions of a time lord as they faced a calamitous ordeal.

Tales of her presence in Victorian London, and within the Dalek asylum.

Two timelines, one in the past, one in the distant future.

Both of them strangers to the Doctor, both of them allies.

And both of them dead.

Clara staggered, lost in her flood of reawakening memories, leaning on every wall she could reach to hold her steady while the thoughts and emotions overwhelmed her.

“What do you mean you keep meeting me? You said I died, how can that be? I’m right here. Where were we? WHEN were we?”

“Clara, this is not a conversation you should be even remembering”

“But you do! YOU! You act like you still remember, how is that fair?” Clara asked, her sense of helplessness and frustration boiling over.

And all the while the voices of the Whisper Men persisted.

The girl who died he tried to save She'll die again inside his grave

The Doctor peered through the wire fencing trying to locate the Whisper Men, he took Clara’s hand.

“Run! Run Clara, another few steps climb and I’ll be able to safely get you out of here”

Elsewhere, Vastra awoke upon a dirtied floor. She stood hurriedly and saw Strax propped against a wide square column. She looked around and spotted a window high up, dark skies staring through it.

She looked higher and saw that the window was in a bottom row of three. The top window on the left was cracked. Above them were backwards letters that read out ‘POLICE’

Vastra continued to look in amazement, realizing where they were, the space between the inner and outer shells of the TARDIS.

Strax woke and also quickly rose to his feet.

Vastra spotted Jenny’s lifeless body lying next to them.

“Jenny! Jenny” she cried out, kneeling beside her.

Strax hurried over and scanned Jenny with a handheld device.

“No heartbeat – complete cardio-collapse, shock-induced” he observed.

Vastra gripped Strax’s shoulder. Her grief overtook her; for without Jenny she could never know composure or compassion.

“Get her back for me, get her back for me, or I will cut you into pieces”

Strax shoved Vastra and felled her to the ground.

“Unhand me, ridiculous reptile!” he snapped.

He held the device over Jenny's chest and activated it.

"There we go!" he said.

Jenny began to cough; a relieved Vastra delicately stroked her face.

"Just applied an electro-cardio-restart - she'll be fine" Strax explained.

"Are you all right, my love, can you hear me?" Vastra asked, Jenny nodded.

Vastra helped Jenny stand just as the Whisper Men approached with the Great Intelligence, wearing once more the face of its original host, Simeon.

"I see you have repaired your pet. No matter, I was only attracting your attention. I presume I have it"

"Dr Simeon" Vastra spoke, recognising Simeon from their last encounter.

"But he died… you told me" Jenny said, startled now by his reappearance.

"Simeon died, but the creature that possessed him lived on" Vastra explained, before cautiously approaching the restored Simeon.

"I take it I am now talking to the Great Intelligence?"

“Welcome to the final resting place of the cruel tyrant. Of the slaughterer of the ten billion and the vessel of the final darkness” Simeon spoke, “Welcome to the tomb…of the Doctor”

The Intelligence stood before the main doors of the tomb’s ‘inner sanctum’.

“The doors require a key. The key is a word. And the word… is the Doctor's”

Almost at his command, the Doctor appeared, a distraught and exhausted Clara in tow, having emerged from the catacombs. The Doctor stood toe to toe with the Intelligence.

“Here I am, late to my own funeral. Glad to see you could make it, Jenny.

Jenny blushed and nodded.

“Open the door, Doctor. Speak, and open your tomb”

“No” The Doctor said, refusing.

“Because you know what's in there?” a curious Intelligence asked.

“I will not open those doors” The Doctor insisted.

“The key is a word lost to time. A secret hidden in the deepest shadow and known to you alone. The answer to a question!”

The Doctor powered forward.

“I will not open my tomb”

“Doctor, what is your name?”

The Doctor refused to reply.

For even something like the Intelligence, the time for mind games was over.

It gripped the Doctor’s face in his gloved hands. The Doctor stared it down before gripping its hand in his own and pulled it away. The Intelligence walked around the Doctor and took aim at the others assembled.

He raised his left hand and formed a fist.

“

“The Doctor's friends. Stop their hearts”

The Whisper Men hissed and menacingly encircled Clara, Strax, Vastra and Jenny.

“Madam, boys, combat formation! They are unarmed!” Strax instructed.

“So are we!” reminded Jenny.

“Do not divulge our military secrets” Strax sharply responded.

The Whisper Men advanced, each with an outstretched hand.

“Stop this! Leave them alone”

“Your name, Doctor. Answer me!”

Strax picked up a pipe and, with a ferocious battle cry, struck at the Whisper Men surrounding him, it made a gash, but all it did was expose nothingness and did little to stop it.

The Doctor turned away from the Intelligence, desiring to check in on the plight of his friends. The Whisper Man in front of Strax reached into his chest with its hand.

“Doctor who?”

“Please, stop it

“Doctor who?”

“Please!”

CHAPTER FOUR

Behind the Doctor, the doors opened, the Doctor turned slowly and gazed at the lit area within. The Intelligence raised its hand, silently instructing the Whisper Men to relinquish their hold over the others.

Clara heard River's voice rattle through the winds.

"The TARDIS can still hear me. Lucky thing since him indoors is being so useless"

"Why did you open the door, sir? I had them on the run!"

"Strax, I didn't say my name"

"No, but I did" River confessed.

The Doctor swallowed before turning to check on the others, he helped them up.

"Is everyone alright?" he asked, as Clara let out a troubling cough.

"That was not nice" she said.

The Doctor held Clara tightly.

"I know, I'm sorry"

Releasing Clara, the reinvigorated Doctor stormed over to where the Intelligence was standing.

“Now then, Dr. Simeon, or Mr G Intelligence, whichever I may call you, answer my question, do you know what’s in there?”

“For me, peace, understanding, at last I know my place in this grand cycle…but for you, it is shame everlasting, and pain eternal. Would you invite us in?”

The Doctor looked over at Clara, he sighed deeply before setting his jaw and strided reluctantly over to the unlocked door. He stopped and pushed them fully open with a groan.

The console room had vines growing through it. As the Doctor climbed the stairs, he could hear the tolling of his ship’s cloister bell. Clara and the others swiftly followed.

Within the centre where the console otherwise would normally be was a shimmering summit of pure temporal energy, different strands rotated around one another.

“What's that?” Clara asked.

“What were you expecting? A body? Bodies are boring; I've had loads of 'em. That's not what my tomb is for” the Doctor revealed.

He led his friends upwards to the main level, opposite them stood the Intelligence and his Whisper Men.

“The light, it’s beautiful” Jenny spoke, complimenting the sight before her.

“Should I destroy it?” Strax asked, still clutching his pipe.

“Shut up Strax” Vastra whispered.

“Doctor, explain. What is that?”

“The tracks of my tears Clara”

“Less poetry, Doctor. Just tell them” The Intelligence said, pressing the time lord on the matters at hand.

“Time travel is… damage. It's like a tear in the fabric of reality. That is the scar tissue of my journey through the universe. My path through time and space, from Gallifrey to Trenzalore”

The Doctor turned the sonic on the stream of energy, disrupting it, enabling a flurry of voices tied to his past and many futures to bleed into the present.

‘You have got to be kidding me’

'Have you ever thought what it's like to be wanderers in the fourth dimension?'

'..Cybermen - they're still in the nursery compared to us…'

'There are corners of the universe that have bred the most dangerous things…'

‘Do I have the right?’

'You were fantastic - absolutely fantastic!'

'I'm the Doctor; I'm from Gallifrey, in the constellation of Kasterborous...'

‘Hello, Stonehenge!’

‘It was the daisiest daisy I’d ever seen.’

‘I’m the Doctor, I’m coming to find you, and I will never ever stop’

‘When people need help, I never refuse’

‘I am completely me’

“My own personal time tunnel, all the days, even the ones that…err, even the ones that I haven't lived yet”

The Doctor grew steadily weaker as he spoke, eventually, sheer exhaustion overtook him and he collapsed to the floor.

Clara ran over and knelt beside him.

“This….this is why we shouldn’t be here…it’s all a paradox” he wearily cautioned.

The Great Intelligence gravitated towards the strand of energy like a wayward moth finding its light of solitude within the galaxy’s largest room.

“No. What are you doing? Somebody stop him!” The Doctor screamed.

“The Doctor's life is an open wound. And an open wound can be entered”

“No, it would destroy you” The Doctor warned.

The Intelligence stared coldly at the Doctor, twice now it had found itself insulted.

“No Doctor, it will be the *making* of me, for I was always fated to arrive here, to begin *my* journey, to unravel your web and weave together my own. I will be your every shadow, casting down fear, doubt, subjecting your mind to thoughts of the purest cruelty, I will taint your choices, make you swing from left to right with no regard for the consequences. Until such time I shall stand to be your shadow no longer and emerge, fully formed, a lord of time, your days shall become mine!”

“Is-is he saying what I think he’s saying?” Clara asked River, but all Professor Song could do was lower her head shamefully.

“It wants to become the Doctor himself” Vastra realized.

“Impossible, you would have to completely overwrite me, even the attempt will burn you up. Once you go through, you can't come back - you'll be scattered along my timeline, like confetti”

“Doctor, maybe that’s the point of it” Clara uttered.

“You fool, your time stream is not uniquely yours, it is a pathway to ALL of time. I will be everywhere, any place, I’ve seen it happen, I shall be there at the start of creation, I shall call myself into awareness, teach myself my own ways, I will learn having already grown, and as you I will be far more than just another Time Lord”

“This is his greatest secret Clara” River explained, “This is how he comes to know it. In choosing his heart, he let the Intelligence have its head. All the poison it spilled out into the universe, it was able to do so through the last surviving Time Lord. A good man, a decent man, has led us down this path to where we stand now, lost to an indecent universe”

The Intelligence stepped backwards into the light and allowed the strands to break it down piece by piece, allowing it to integrate and merge with the energy nexus as it became consumed.

On the floor, the Doctor gasped and cried out in pain. The interior of the tomb glowed a bright and scarring red.

“What's wrong with him? What's happening?” a deeply troubled Clara asked.

“He's being rewritten!” Vastra uttered.

Clara could see it; all of it, through the visual representations provided by the unstable strands of the Doctor’s maligned timeline.

The Great Intelligence appeared throughout, witnessing the actions of every incarnation, shadowing it, waiting for his chance like a praying mantis.

It begins with their first encounter as enemies, now destined to also be their last.

Simeon’s frigid hands touch the Doctor’s skin, steam rises from it as the heat leaves all of his body; he begins to turn blue and cold to the touch, drained of all life.

“Simeon is attacking his entire timeline, he's dying all at once” Vastra explained, checking the readings on a handheld device that charted the flow of time.

“The Dalek Asylum, then Androzani, it’s never in the right order”

Clara homed in on what Vastra mentioned.

The Dalek Asylum.

A place she’d never been.

But a place where she’d been seen.

By him.

By the Doctor.

Vastra continued to chart the progress of the destabilizing timeline.

“Now he’s reaching back further, across the eras that made him who he was, he’s killing every incarnation, or twisting their perceptions, making them question whether or not they are good…he’s toying with them!”

The Doctor writhered on the floor, screaming in anguish.

“Oh, dear Goddess!” Vastra cried.

“What's wrong?”

“Clara, A universe without the Doctor as he was, with the Intelligence in control - there will be consequences. Jenny. With me.

Vastra departed with Jenny in tow.

Clara clutched the Doctor’s hand, urging him not to let go.

So much needed explaining, a part of her resented how selfish she was being in these crucial moments, but she had a feeling the answers could somehow win the day for them all.

“The Dalek Asylum. You said it was me that saved you. How? Victorian London. How, how could I have been in Victorian London?”

The Doctor was far too pained to give a straight answer, he was screaming at invisible predators, only he could see and grasp the scale of what the Intelligence was doing to him.

“No. Please, stop my life… My whole life is burning…bi-generation, what is that? No, you’re tampering with the very make up of time lord physiology, no one has the right to play god on this level…it’s farcical. Enough. STOP. PLEASE!

Vastra, Jenny and Strax stepped outside; Vastra pointed her time charter up to the night sky.

“What are you scanning for?” asked Jenny.

“Local star systems”

“Why?”

“Because they're disappearing”

“Disappearing? How?”

“The Doctor's timeline has been corrupted. His every victory reversed. Think how many lives that man saved, how many worlds. He saved your life when we met.”

She turned to Jenny to find she had been swept away by time’s ever changing tides.

“Jenny? Please, Jenny! No! Oh, God, oh, please, no!”

“Reptile scum!”

Vastra looked up to see Strax, still wielding his pipe, made an advance towards her with murder on his mind; he swung the pipe at her violently. She backed away.

“You are an affront to Sontaran purity! Prepare to perish!”

“We're friends! Strax, your past is changing, but I swear, we are comrades!”

“Die, reptile!”

As Strax moved towards her again, Vastra took out a weapon and turned it on him, with one jolt Strax vanished in a haze of energy, reduced to atoms.

“Strax! Oh Strax!” Vastra screamed.

She questioned how long would it be before she forgot everything she’d ever been?

Clara knelt beside the Doctor, lying on his back, his head barely aware of where he was.

There was nothing she could do for him, every delay gave the Intelligence its advantage, and there was only one recourse….to confront it head on.

“I have to go in there” Clara said.

This was enough to spur the Doctor into tethering himself to his current whereabouts.

“No, Clara, please…no”

“But this is what I've already done. You've already seen me do it. I'm the Impossible Girl, and this is why”

“Whatever you're thinking of doing… don't” River pleaded.

“If I step in there… what happens?”

“The time winds will tear you into a million pieces. A million versions of you, living and dying all over time and space. Like… echoes”

“But the echoes could save the Doctor, right?”

“But they won't be you - the real you will die. They'll just be copies”

“But they'll be real enough to save him. Like my mum said, the soufflé isn't the soufflé - the soufflé is the recipe. It's the only way to save him, isn't it?”

River nodded.

Vastra re-entered the tomb, sombre, but somehow finding the strength to remain sane and whole.

Clara wondered if this were possible because her plan was already working.

“The stars are going out. And Jenny and Strax are dead. There must be something we can do?”

“Well, how about that? I'm Soufflé Girl after all”

The Doctor reached out to her, weak and timid, utterly spent, but determined not to lose her.

“No… Please…” he begged meekly.

Clara walked towards the light.

“If this works, get out of here as fast as you can. And spare me a thought now and then”

The Doctor turned his head as she rose and headed towards the tear.

“No, Clara…!”

In fact, you know what?”

She turned back to the Doctor.

“Run. Run, you clever boy. And remember me”

And with a spring in her step, Clara leapt into the light.

'I don't know where I am...'

'..I just know I'm running.'

Sometimes it's like I've lived a thousand lives in a thousand places.

I'm born, I live, I die.

'And always, there's the Doctor.

Always, I'm running to save the Doctor,

Again...

And again...

And again.

And he hardly ever hears me.

But I've always been there

Right from the very beginning.

Right from the day he started running.

Every good day, every bad day, I'm there for him

I let him know when he makes a mistake

I pick him up wherever he falls

I tell him when he's standing tall.

There are days I don't need to remind him that I'm there

Because on those days, he remembers, and he cares

So for all those echoes that you can't quite place or see

Just run you clever boy

And remember me.

Eventually, the Doctor’s timeline stabilized and returned to its normal state. Strax and Jenny’s deaths undone. They now stood with Vastra on one side, the replenished Doctor stood on the opposite, his back to them.

“It was an unprovoked and violent attack, but that's no excuse…” Strax uttered, taking umbrage with his disintegration at Vastra’s hand.

“We are all restored, that is all that matters now” Vastra insisted.

The Doctor turned to confront them.

“We are not all restored!”

“You can't go in there. It's your own time stream, for God's sake!” River argued.

“I have to get her back” The Doctor insisted.

“Of course! But not like this!”

“But how?” Jenny asked.

“Is she still alive? It killed Dr Simeon” Vastra added.

“No, it didn’t. The Intelligence was right, it grafted itself on to my own history, became one with me, Clara figured the best way to keep it from completely unravelling what I, what WE, built was to reach out to its own creation when it was in an infant state and teach it to keep a house in order, a woman knows a thing or two about that”

“Doctor, please listen to me - at least hear me” River pleaded.

“Now… if I don't come back - and I might not……go to the TARDIS. The fast return protocols should be on, she'll take you home, then shut herself down”

River stepped in between the Doctor and his friends.

“There has to be another way. Use the TARDIS, use something. Save her, yes, but for God's sake, be sensible!”

River raised her hand to slap the Doctor, only for him to turn and grip her wrist.

“How are you even doing that? I'm not really here”

“You are always here, to me. And I always listen and I can always see you”=

“Then why didn't you speak to me?”

“I thought it would hurt too much”

“I believe I could have coped!”

No. I thought it would hurt ME. And I was right”

The Doctor gripped River’s face in his hands, leaned over and gave her a most mesmerising kiss on her phantom lips, a kiss she could feel and taste.

Strax, Vastra, and Jenny all exchanged puzzled look at the Doctor seemingly excusing himself to kiss the sky.

“There is a time to live and a time to sleep. You are an echo, River. Like Clara. Like all of us, in the end. My fault, I know, but you should've faded by now”

“It's hard to leave when you haven't said goodbye”

“Then tell me, because I don't know - how do I say it?”

“There's only one way I would accept. If you ever loved me... say it like you're going to come back”

“Well then…” The Doctor said, backing away, trying not to be too non-chalant.

“See you around Professor Song”

“See you whenever you see me, sweetie”

And with that, River faded from sight.

After a moment, the Doctor slowly turned around. With one long, lasting and deep breath, he took one step forward and stepped into his timeline.

CHAPTER FIVE

ARCADIA, SECOND CITY OF GALLIFREY

THE LAST DAY OF THE TIME WAR

As far as the eye could see, Dalek saucers filled the blackened skies.

Orbiting Dalek fighter carriers swopped in and looped over Arcadia, repeatedly bombarding it.

Civilians ran through the debris, laser and flames all around.

A huge futuristic city. Domes, and spires, and temples, and pyramids, and it was *ablaze!*

Plumes of black, raging fires, crashed spaceships.

The Daleks swooped through the air, down among the ruined buildings.

Two soldiers manned a giant gun, firing bursts of energy. They scored a direct hit!

Three Daleks burst into flame at once, crashing down to the street below.

Screams rang out form the Arcadians.

The gun and the soldiers are reduced to nothing but ash, as further explosions and laser fire rained down.

The other Daleks stopped, and spun round on the guns.

“Exterminate!!” the Daleks cried.

On ruined street, soldiers and civilians ran out, screaming and exchanging return fire as energy bolts stabbed down from above.

“Exterminate!!”

Exterminate!! Exterminate!!

Civilians and soldiers scrambled, Daleks moved on land towards them.

“Exterminate! Exterminate!”

A father held the hand of his youngest, followed by more civilians racing along an alleyway, one Dalek each bearing down on them.

Within the ruined shell of a nearby building, a lone time lord survivor dashed through the blazing corridors, trying their best to outpace a fireball headed directly his way.

The time lord, clad in a black leather peacoat, a navy jumper, dark trousers and matching shoes, headed towards a tall blue box nested in a section of the chambers that had been levelled to rubble.

Those sheltering within the ruins from the Dalek onslaught were able to catch but a fleeting glimpse of the time lord as he headed inside the box.

And the Daleks had taken notice too.

It was unmistakably the Doctor.

“The Doctor is detected! Seek! Locate! Destroy!”

The Daleks on the ground and in the air converged on the broken, battered building…

“Destroy! Destroy!”

The sound of the TARDIS can be heard.

The Daleks stopped, and there was a sudden crash as the ship blasted through the brickwork, smashing a hole right through it.

It whirled through the air, crashing straight into one of the Daleks, which fell flaming to the ground. It ricocheted off into another Dalek, which was thrown into the side of a building, exploding also into flames.

It continued to spin, and whirl, and then shot straight up, hurtling into the sky.

“The Doctor is escaping”

The Dalek eyestalks remained trained on it but for a few more moments, then all turned to inspect the hole the TARDIS had punched straight through the side of the building.

The smoke was clearing, and the Daleks could just about see the lettering the Doctor had been scribing on the walls before the complex had come under heavier attack, forcing him to flee.

The Dalek’s sole iris stared at these words, trying to process it, its iris widened as if in fear.

NO MORE

“What are these words? Explain!”

“Explain!”

The soldiers, seizing their chance, fired at the Daleks causing the remainder to ignite in an unholy pyre.

They knew what those words meant.

A protest in uncivil times

A summons to arms.

A final end.

There was a thunderous ‘boom’ and Clara Oswald was thrown out of the space/time vortex and deposited straight in the midst of the Arcadian siege.

“Doctor” she cried out.

There was a loud thudding.

“DOCTOR!”

The thudding continued, Clara curled up, lowering her head to the ground, she sobbed.

“Please, please I don’t know where I am”

“Clara” a voice rang out, a warm, cosy, familiar and friendly voice.

Clara ceased sobbing and lifted her head.

“You can hear me, I know you can”

“I can't see you”

“I'm everywhere. You're inside my time stream. Everything around you is me” explained the Doctor.

The First Doctor walked past her, too preoccupied to take notice.

“I can see you”

The Sixth Doctor walked by in the opposite direction. Clara stood. Then the Fifth Doctor and Ninth Doctor ran past.

“All your different faces, they're here”

The Fourth Doctor ran past.

“They are my past. Nothing more. Every good day, every bad day” the Doctor explained.

“No, I mean, they’re here, physically, they’re here” Clara revealed, “I’m in the middle of some…some kind of battlefield, I..I don’t think I’m dreaming, or you’re dreaming, this feels like a real place, a real time….”

There was loud cry of anguish followed by a thunderclap.

Clara fell to the ground.

“What's wrong, what's happening?”

“I'm inside my own time stream, it's collapsing in on itself”

“Well, get out, then” Clara begged.

“Not until I've got you” The Doctor replied stubbornly.

“I don't even know who I am” Clara replied.

“You're my Impossible Girl. I'm sending you something - not from my past, from yours. Look up. Look”

An autumn lead fell from the sky.

“This is you, Clara. Everything you were or will be. Take it”

Clara gripped the leaf, and held it close.

“You blew into the world on this leaf. Hold tight. It will take you home”

Clara staggered along the pathway.

“Clara! Clara! Come on!”

Clara turned around and saw the Doctor, her Doctor, the Eleventh, standing there, encouraging her to walk towards him.

Behind him, the link to the tear in his timestream sealed itself shut, fully healed. The Doctor, however, was not concerned about such things; his mind was fixated on making sure Clara was well.

“Come on, to me, now. You can do it, I know you can”

“How?”

“Because it's impossible. And you're my Impossible Girl”

Clara walked towards him slowly.

“How many times have you saved me, Clara? Just this once, just for the hell of it, let me save you! You have to trust me, Clara, I'm real. Just one more step”

Finally, Clara reached him, wrapping her arms around his neck. He gripped her tightly.

“Clara. My Clara” a relieved Doctor spoke in elation, kissing Clara’s delicate hands.

As the Doctor clung to Clara, he gazed out at the sheer horror before him and realized just where his timestream had stranded the pair of them.

In the distance, he could make out the city at the heart of the Arcadian capital, but now there was a huge crack in its once impenetrable dome. Dalek ships were crashing into it on kamikaze attacks, fixated on breaking the dome completely, or damaging as many parts of the city they could manage.

Deep beneath the city were Time Lord high command war rooms - like a cross between Winston Churchill's underground war rooms and a classy Egyptian tomb.

Two men strolled along the corridors, both were Time Lord Military.

The General- thick set, grizzled, and Androgar, younger, more nervous.

They made their way to a vast inner chamber; a huge central table emitted a holographic display.

“So he was there then?” The General asked.

“He left a message, a written warning for the Daleks” Androgar revealed.

The General stared intently at the holographic screens. They displayed an image of three words burned into the wall.

NO MORE

“He's a fool!” Androgar uttered, greatly amused.

The General. Less amused and grimmer.

“No. He's a madman”

Androgar walked around the table, briefing the General t he hologram changed to highlight the Dalek attack

“As you can see, sir, all Dalek fleets surrounding the planet, now converging

on the capitol - but the Sky Trenches are holding”

The General was barely listening.

“Where did he go next?”

Androgar was puzzled by the General’s priorities.

“What does it matter? This is their biggest ever attack, sir - they're throwing everything at us…”

A younger Time Lord swiftly arrived at their side.

“Sir, we have a security breach to the time vaults”

The three of them, now crowded round a schematic that hung in the air in front of them. Clearly a diagram of a building. A red dot was flashing along the diagram corridors.

“The Omega Arsenal. Where all the forbidden weapons are locked away”

They're not forbidden any more - we've used all of them against the Daleks” revealed Androgar.

The General had a moment of realisation - of horror.

“No. No, we *haven't”*

Vast, ornate, stone-built - like high security cathedral. Alarms were sounding as Chancellery Guards come pounding in from every entrance, surrounding the General and Androgar, who pushed their way to the front.

The General, stepping up to the plinth, horror building on his face.

The plinth was stationed in the centre of the room. It wasn't huge, just enough to support one moderately sized statu.

And it was empty!

"It's gone. The Moment is gone" the General uttered despairingly.

"I don't understand. What is the Moment? I've never heard of it" Androgar confessed.

"The galaxy eater" the General explained, "The final work of the ancients of Gallifrey, a weapon so powerful the operating system became sentient. According to legend, it developed a conscience"

"And we've never *used* it?" Androgar asked.

"How do you use a weapon of ultimate mass destruction, when it can stand in judgement on you? There is only one man who would even try"

A desert plain, shimmering in the heat. Footprints could be made out imprinted on the searing sands; they led towards a small hut positioned in the midst of a glistening crystalline summit.

Inside the hut was a calmed and relaxed Ninth Doctor, he looked out the window, towards a brightening gleam of light emitting from outside, unable to tell if a new dawn was breaking on Gallifrey or if it is was indeed the final bitter end of Arcadia.

There was something, someone, in the room with him. It was the operating system of the galaxy eating Moment. It had taken a humanoid form, tapping into the future of the Doctor to take the form of his eventual travelling companion Rose Tyler.

The final assassin of the Dalek Emperor, the heart of the TARDIS, the bad wolf

“We were killing pigs when the Yanks arrived.

A Tuesday morning, sunlight and gutter-blood, outside the slaughter house.

From the main road, they would have heard the screaming, then heard it stop and had a view of us in our gloves and aprons coming down the hill.

Two lines of them, guns on their shoulders, marching. Armoured cars and tanks and open jeeps.

Sunburnt hands and arms. Unarmed, in step, hosting for Normandy.

Not that we knew then where they were headed, standing there like youngsters as they tossed us gum and tubes of coloured sweets'”

The Moment gathered its thoughts, stood up, and spoke to him.

“I hear you”

The Doctor didn’t seem to think that amounted to much. This was a child he was addressing, if he wanted to fashion it into the kind of weapon he wanted to use, he would have.

“If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs, Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—My friend, you would not tell with such high zest, to children ardent for some desperate glory, the old Lie:

Dulce et decorum est

Pro patria mor”

The Moment took a minute or two to process the meaning of the Doctor’s words. Despite having a conscience, it was still at the mercy of its operator, it had been built to bring a final word to war, and to then bring that word to whoever used it in the next, hoping they would be the one to walk away.

But now this man was trying to show that it needed to be more than just a word for malice and death, and consequence. Far, far too many become radicalized by it; it was an all too easy outcome to engineer.

No more could the Moment be the language of bloodshed, it needed to be the vessel for hope.

It made the Doctor this pledge.

“Well, so long as you’re the one who’ll save us all, I will do my best”

CHAPTER SIX

HOMEWORLD OF THE OOD

2009

Ood Sigma led the Doctor, the tenth such incarnation, towards the mouth of a large, looming ice cavern.

There, sat the eldest of the Ood, its face greatly aged, its skull more brain-like. Swathed in white robes. It held its hind-brain in one hand, the other hand scooping smoke from the small fire in front of it, like it were breathing incense.

Its muttering voice is whispery, more human than Sigma's.

It and the remaining Ood that gathered turned their heads…

“He has come”

The Doctor and Ood Sigma arrived.

“Sit, with the Elder of the Ood. And share the Dreaming” invited the Elder.

There was a space for the Doctor, opposite the Elder. He sat, Ood Sigma standing, forever on duty, to the side.

“So. Right. Hello” the Tenth spoke, “Sorry for keeping you, had a wedding to attend, Sarah Jane, brilliant girl, got herself married, well, almost married, had a bit of bad luck with the Trickster…”

The Ood were not interested, for the Tenth had a far greater role to play in events that were to follow well beyond the path they were about to set for him.

Once this latest trial had passed, the Tenth would be called upon to prevent the end of time at the hand of President Rassilon, but first, he must be joined, first, he must come to understand.

“You will join, you will join, you will join, you will join…”

As Sigma repeated this, the Elder and the remaining Ood put their hind-brains in their laps; all joined hands, the Ood on either side of the Doctor joining hands with him.

The Doctor was cautious… but eventually, he too, reached out and took their hands.

CONTACT!

The Tenth saw, through the locks of forgotten time, his future self and Clara standing in the ruined streets of Arcadia, civilians were scattered in all direction, some sought shelter, but others remained exposed out in the open, bravely fixated on finding their lost children.

Clara looked to the Eleventh.

“These people, all of them, they’re yours, this is Gallifrey, your home”

“The last day of the time war, the day I ended it all, the day I broke the promise”

“Promise?” Clara asked.

“My name, my *real* name, that was never the point, the name I chose was the Doctor, a healer, with a duty of care to all I met in the universe. What I did this day was not in the name of the Doctor”

They looked out at the ruined city, destruction on a mass scale.

The Doctor’s thoughts turned not to the state of his homeworld, that had imprinted itself on his mind the first time, no, this time his thoughts turned to that first fateful trip to Skaro many lifetimes ago…another day of broken promises.

All his companions wanted was to leave the petrified forests and what appeared to be a dead city. A simple matter of retrieving a fluid link necessary for the TARDIS to travel. It had been damaged, or so they were told.

But the Doctor had lied, as was always his rule. He simply needed an excuse to explore this city. All in the name of exploration, curiosity.

It was curiosity that drew him to the Daleks, and it in kind drew the Daleks to him and his people.

“Just what am I Clara?” he whispered.

“Have you really forgotten?” Clara asked, hearing him.

“Yes. Maybe, yes” The Doctor admitted, unwilling to raise his voice to match the supreme levels of angst he was feeling.

“We've got enough warriors, any old idiot can be hero” Clara said, as sirens rang out.

“Then what do I do?” The Doctor asked.

“What you've always done. Be a doctor!”

Clara looked upon the Eleventh’s face…those words had landed. There was new light, new life, in his eye.

The dawning realization of hope.

There just might be another way.

Perhaps there always had been, but he always felt that something much bigger than him had conspired to change his mind at every wrong possible turn, telling him to, at first, regret then, to forget, and, in neither instance, do anything to pivot or alter his actions.

Had it been the Intelligence the entire time?

Perhaps even the matter of the fluid link?

With the Intelligence now dormant, could his choices again be his own?

Could they be concise, consistent, and clear?

Would it be so much easier to blame it and not himself?

“You told me the name you chose was a promise. What was the promise?” Clara asked.

Children emerged from hiding places, fires still blazed and ash rained down, but there was hope.

Parents were reaching for their children, families reunited in the daylight.

A memory surfaced for both Doctors, now looking at each other from across two different time zones, the memory of the day they chose their name.

Their voices were now so quiet.

“Never cruel or cowardly” the Tenth Doctor replied.

Back in the ice caves of the Ood homestead, the Tenth glanced over to his right, and caught a glimpse of something that brought hope and healing to both of his hearts.

The Moment, still in the form of Rose, beamed proudly at him with a delighted and compassionate smile, a light in the cave flared brightly, revealing that, behind her, was the TARDIS.

The Tenth Doctor suddenly sensed resurgence in recollection, thoughts that had previously slept in his mind, barricaded, sealed under lock and key, lapsed retention from out-of-sync timelines.

A memory of time served.

In war.

At last it all made sense to him.

Just this once, *everyone* could come home.

WAR COUNCIL CHAMBERS, GALLIFREY

THE LAST DAY OF THE TIME WAR

High over Gallifrey, stationed on their foreboding attack saucers, the merciless Daleks continued with their largest ever bombardment of the planet.

As explosions rattled the capital, the General and Androgar hurried along the corridors of the vulnerable citadel, making their way to the war room.

“You're sure the message is from him?” the General asked.

“Oh yes!”

Why would he do that??

A Holographic message lit itself across the war conference table, two words on, just hanging there.

Gallifrey Stands

The Ninth Doctor’s voice rang out over the loudspeakers.

“Do you want to come with me? Because if you do, then I should warn you!”

“What is the mad fool talking about now?” the General spoke out loud, caring little if the Doctor could hear him over the communications link. Knowing his calibre of character, he would take the ‘mad’ label as being most complimentary anyway.

“Hello. Hello, Gallifrey High command, this is the Doctor speaking”

The Eleventh Doctor's face appeared on one of the display screens, the background showed he was within his own TARDIS, brought through the time lock by the Moment.

The Tenth Doctor's face appeared on another screen.

“Hello, also the Doctor, can you hear me?”

“Dear god, three of them” The General realized in despair.

“Ghosts from your past, aliens from the future!” The Ninth Doctor replied over the comms of his own TARDIS.

The Eleventh Doctor's Police box was in the skies above Gallifrey. Far below, on the planet's surface, another TARDIS, the Tenths’ grazing across desert dunes.

The Tenth Doctor also flew round his console.

“We're positioned at equidistant intervals round the globe”

The Tenth took a moment and exulted himself.

"Equidistant"! So grown up!”

The Tenth Doctor's TARDIS, slowly turned.

He addressed the war council.

“Using our TARDISes, we're going to freeze Gallifrey in a single moment in time”

The General was taken aback.

“What, even if that were possible…Why would you do such a thing?”

The Eleventh Doctor was now working frantically at a silver Sphere, the purest form of the Moment itself.

“Because the alternative is burning” the Eleventh replied.

“And I've seen that” the Tenth Doctor added.

“And I never want to see it again” the Eleventh finished.

The sheer weight of what the salvation would mean for all who inhabited Gallifrey weighed hard on the General.

“We would be lost in another universe, frozen in a single moment. We would have nothing”

“You would have hope” the Eleventh assured them.

The Ninth Doctor did his best to alleviate concerns also, in his own encouraging manner.

“It won’t be quiet, it won’t be safe, and it won’t be calm, but I’ll tell you what it *will* be….the trip of a lifetime!

For a moment, all there were was the terrifying Dalek attack armada, hammering the planet with their dreaded energy weapons.

At first it wasn’t quite clear what they were, and then, it became clear as all crystal.

More TARDISES, all of them the same chameleon-knackered type 40 in the shape of a blue box, flew into view and orbited the planet

“Calling the war council of Gallifrey– this is the Doctor” announced the first incarnation.

The screens of the war room were soon awash with images of all the various Doctors racing around their consoles.

“Commencing calculations” announced the First Doctor.

More TARDISes hurtled past the Daleks saucers, carefully navigating their way across what amounted to a galactic scale minefield.

All the Doctors could now be seen on the observation screens within the War room.

“Good luck everyone” wished the Second.

“Stand by” advised the Third.

“Soon be there” assured the Fifth.

“Across the boundaries that divide one universe from another” proclaimed the Seventh.

“Locked on to these coordinates” spoke the Sixth.

“And for my next trick!” spoke the Ninth.

“I didn’t know when I was well off! All *Twelve* of them, even the ones with the vanity complex”, a visibly frustrated General observed.

The Daleks saucers bombarded the planet with more firepower.

The Time Lords were thrown to their knees as explosions rocked Gallifrey.

“Sir! The Daleks know something is happening. They're increasing their firepower!” confirmed Androgar.

The General, staring fixedly at the display, became, albeit forcefully, a believer.

“Do it, Doctor. Just do it! Do it!!

The Eleventh Doctor, wrestled with the controls, the engines started to roar into life. He took a moment.

“Okay. We’re ready”

The Eleventh Doctor slammed down hard on the levers.

“Geronimo!!” he bellowed.

The Tenth Doctor also began slamming levers.

“Allons-y!!”

In his own TARDIS, the Ninth Doctor slammed away at his own console. Before he helped do his part for the rescue effort, he took a brief pause to reflect on the choices that had lead him here.

He was most relieved to find they were all of his own.

For too long he had felt a great shadow had loomed over his life since the advent of the time war, voices in his head that had compelled him to renounce his very identity, to break his every promise, to become less of a healer and more of a warrior.

That voice was no longer there, it had been replaced by a new one, one of reassurance, one who’s idea of civility and restraint was a quiet night out on the town eating out at fish and chip shops and getting a taxi back home. To friends, to family, to all the everyday things people in wars fight to preserve.

That’s what was worth coming back for. Common folks, common want and needs.

He shouldn’t be here, he should be on the opposite end of the time lock, he should be learning to life with impossible and dreadful choices. But now? Now he could tuck the war away and cut himself loose, out onto the universe, and maybe meet a nice girl for chips along the way.

All this opportunity was waiting for him.

And all he could say to sum it all up was this.

“Fantastic!”

Pulling out from Gallifrey - the TARDISes all spun around in formation. Past all the Dalek ships and their blasting energy rays, until there was a resounding boom and a burst of explosive, all consuming white energy. The biggest and most terrible explosion ever witnessed

It went on and on and on and on -- and then swiftly faded to white.

When everything had settled, there was no trace of Gallifrey, or the TARDISES controlled by the Doctors. Only one remained.

One vessel, one Doctor.

Clara walked over to the Eleventh as he stared at the monitor, navigating the time charts, CVEs, entrances to black world, all attempting to get a bearing on the location of Gallifrey.

“Any sign of it?” asked Clara.

“No, not a trace, wherever they’ve ended up, I can’t pinpoint it” the Doctor revealed.

“Your people, they’re all so powerful, surely they can give you some kind of…sign? To let you know they’re alright?” Clara suggested.

“Yes, yes, they’re not as helpless as they think; they have the means to let us know. And if they did, it’d have happened yesterday, or tomorrow, and we’d have known about it today, either a minute before or a second earlier, it’s the waiting that’ll drive you batty if you let it. No, no, this is where we play the long game, the one that involves all of the waiting, not my favourite game to play you understand”

“Doctor, you can’t spend all your days just…waiting” Clara advised.

The Doctor smiled, he gently touched her hand.

“You can read me oh so easily Clara Oswald” he said.

“So, it’s over then?” Clara asked.

“It’s far from being all over Clara…despite all I did in the previous timeline and now this one, the Daleks found a way to survive, and thrive, in the universe again, but on the bright side, if they so choose, the Time Lords can now find their way back and keep an eye on them”

“So it could all just…kick off again?” said Clara.

“Rearrange the chairs on the Titanic if you must, all the same passengers will take a seat on them” The Doctor spoke.

Clara felt uneasy.

“Then what was the point?” she pondered.

The Doctor wrapped his arm around her shoulder.

“Ask yourself this, if we knew the answer, would we see less war, or more of it?
”

“I don’t think I want to consider that” said Clara.

“Then ask others what they think, teach them a thing or two about it, I guarantee they’ll listen, and I promise you that they’ll do something about it”

“Who’d believe a war like this could even exist?” Clara asked.

“Oh that’s easy…dreamers…they’re everywhere you know, and the biggest concentration of them can be found in one place….”

Clara was curious, and wasn’t prepared for what the Doctor suggested next.

“Clara Oswald…it’s time you went back to school”

LONDON, SHOREDITCH

2013

Waste no more time arguing about what a good man should be. Be one.

-Marcus Aurelius

The School bell rang.

Clara - a schoolteacher now – was finishing a write-up on the class blackboard, and was beginning to wipe away that day's lesson as the class disembarked.

Another teacher, Tom, skidded to a halt as he came in the other way to speak to Clara.

He was about Clara's age, pleasant looking. Agitated, flustered, and panting like he's been through a miniature marathon.

He was also clearly quite smitten with her.

"Have you been running?" Clara asked.

"Are *you* okay Oswald? There was a call for you, at the office. From you're...doctor"

Clara smiled.

"Did he leave an address?"

Tom handed her a note, she turned to pick up her belongings, which included a motorcycle helmet.

Clara blasted out on her motorbike, roaring out of the Coal Hill gates.

Clara zoomed along a bustling city street, through a tunnel, along the motorway, until she came along a country road. She came to a halt, and looked down the path ahead.

Parked in the valley below the road was the shape of the TARDIS.

Clara shifted the bike round, aiming it at the TARDIS, and revved a few more times.

She hit the horn. Three times, like a prearranged signal. Then off she roared, straight towards the police box.

She grinned as her face was blasted by the wind, the bike hammered straight towards those bright blue doors, which at the last moment snapped open.

The motorbike disappeared into the police box with almost comical speed. A terrible screech of tyres and Clara, on the bike, came flying straight through the doors, screeching to a halt.

The Doctor had his back to Clara, seated on the steps in the console room and leafing through a book, he grinned to himself as heard her arrived, for the tough doesn't turn, the very picture of nonchalance.

Clara swung off of the motorbike. Without yet turning, the Doctor let her know what he thought of her grand entrance, all in one word.

“Draft”

Clara raised her hands, clicked her fingers, then crossed them.

Had she earned the trick?

The TARDIS doors slammed shut, all by themselves. Clara beamed with elation.

The ship had finally entrusted her with its magic.

“Fancy a week in Ancient Mesopotamia……followed by future Mars?” the Doctor proposed, finally turning to acknowledge Clara’s presence in his company.

“Will there be cocktails?” Clara asked.

“On the moon” he guaranteed.

“The moon'll do!”

In a standoff, they each held the others look, until they both let out a jubilant shriek and rushed over to one another. The Doctor swung Clara around, lifting her off of her feet.

“How’s the new job? Teach anything good?”

“No, learn anything?” Clara asked, knowing exactly what the answer would be, given the sort of person the Doctor was.

“Not a thing” the Doctor replied, obliging his best friend’s expectations of his response.

As the two friends gave one another a high five with both hands, the TARDIS suddenly lurched, causing the Doctor to let out a big ‘yowza’ in response.

“What's happening?” Clara asked, grabbing on to the console.

The Doctor, also gripping tightly onto his ship’s central console, checked the scanners. He was fascinated at what the readings were telling him.

This was a new mystery.

This was a new *adventure*.

EPILOUGE

GALLIFREY

A very long time ago…

Inside of a workshop within the central chambers of the Arcadian capital, two men were hunched over counters, working on different projects. Suddenly, an alarm went off, causing both men to cease working and look up, one of them ran over to the monitors.

“Something wrong?” asked his colleague.

“It's the repair shop. What kind of idiot would try and steal a faulty TARDIS?”

On the monitor there was a row of plain grey cylinders, tall enough for a man. These were defective Type 40 TT capsules, the ships which the specially selected time lords of Gallifrey used to sail across the time/space vortex on missions of critical importance to the web of time.

An older man escorted a young girl, his granddaughter, towards one of the cylinder capsules.

As she boarded, the elder looked nervously around the room, hoping he had not been spotted.

When he noticed that one of the security cameras was recording their every move, he cursed his own promise under his breath, appalled by his own careless omission.

It was the sort of neglect that could very well cost him everything.

If he were to be identified now, the shame it would bring on the house of Lungbarrow would be far too damming to overcome. He could not put his family heritage through such humility.

His great fear was swiftly realized.

“Doctor?”

The Doctor turned to his right in response to his name being called, and found himself cornered by a fellow Gallifreyan, her hair tied in a ponytail, attired in technician’s outfit, red covering her from head to toe, a brown buckle for a belt.

As they stared at one another, the Doctor felt an overwhelming sense of déjà vu, it pestered him greatly.

He knew he had not laid eyes on this young lady before, and yet, there was something about her that evoked something of a timeless memory.

“Yes, what is it? What do you want?” he asked.

“Sorry. But you're about to make a very big mistake”

The Doctor’s face sank; this was a very disturbing turn of events. How would he explain his actions to the high council should this young woman turn him in?

What would become of Susan?

Everything that was ever important to him hinged on what the girl would say next.

With the gentlest of smiles and coyest of winks, the young girl, a splinter of Clara, leaned one shoulder on to the capsule stationed beside the craft the Doctor had selected and gave its hull a quick knock.

“Don’t steal that one, steal *this* one, the navigation’s knackered, but you’ll have much more fun” she said.

I don't know where I am.

It's like I'm breaking into a million pieces. And there's only one thing I remember.

I have to save the Doctor.

He always looks different.

But I always know it's him.

Sometimes I think I'm everywhere at once.

Running every second, just to find him.

Just to save him.

But he never hears me.

Almost never.

I blew into this world on a leaf.

I'm still blowing.

I don't think I'll ever land.

I'm Clara Oswald, I'm the impossible girl.

I was born to save The Doctor.